

Amendments to the Drawings

Please replace Fig(s). 3, contained in drawing sheet(s) 3 with the attached replacement figure(s).

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-20, 22-36 were previously pending in this application. Claims 1 and 15 have been amended. New claims 37-46 have been added. As a result claims 1-6, 8-20, 22-46 are pending for examination with claims 1, 15, and 37 being independent claims. No new matter has been added.

Fig. 3 was amended to correct a mistake in one of the reference numbers.

The specification was amended to incorporate a statement taken from US provisional application 60/259,815 (page 2, lines 4-6), which was incorporated by reference into the present application. In addition, the specification was amended to incorporate a statement taken from US provisional application 60/247,060 (page 1, lines 19-22), which also was incorporated by reference into the present application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action rejected claims 1-4, 8-18, 22-33 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fischer US 5,852,651 in view of U.S. Patent No. Koonen US 6,674,966. The Examiner stated that it would be obvious to use the free space optical transmission method of Koonen, for communication between a base station and an antenna assembly as in Fischer, instead of the use of fibers as suggested by Fischer (col. 3, line 56).

In order to further the application towards allowance, applicants have limited claims 1 and 15 to require that the uplink RF signals are analog modulated onto the light beam. This requirement is believed to clearly distinguish over the prior art and thus will hopefully expedite the application toward allowance.

In US provisional application 60/247,060, applicants presented three possible methods of transferring RF signals within a cellular network. A first option relates to analog modulation of the RF signals onto the light beam (page 2 of the provisional). A second option (page 3 of the provisional) relates to digitizing the RF signals and transmitting the digitized signals on the light beam. A third option (page 3 of the provisional) relates to decoding the RF signals and transmitting the signals after decoding. The amendment to claims 1 and 15 limits the claims to the first option.

Fischer mentions in the background section (column 2, lines 37-58) a system in which a fiber between a base station and a remote antenna carries a light beam which is analog modulated with RF signals to be transmitted between the base station and the remote antenna. Fischer, however, states that analog modulation is error prone (col. 2, lines 61-63) and suggests digitizing the RF signals before modulating them onto a light beam passing along a fiber between the base station and the remote antenna.

A reader of Koonen or any other reference suggesting to use free space optics as an alternative to fiber optics would not consider using analog modulation of the light beam, since Fischer has pointed out the significant distortion and error levels of analog modulation in fiber, and it is well known that free space generally has higher error and distortion levels than fiber.

The dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their parent claims.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, applicants submit that the claims are patentable over the prior art. Allowance of the application is respectfully awaited. If, however, the Examiner is not convinced and the Examiner is of the opinion that a telephone conversation may forward the present application toward allowance, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner call Yaakov Schatz at 1 (877) 428-5468. Please note that this is a direct *toll free* number in the US that is answered in the undersigned's Israel office. Israel is 7 hours ahead of Washington.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 57/080.

Respectfully submitted,
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FIG. 3

